



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony

In Support of
HB 5434, An Act Concerning the Regulation Of Cannabis

General Law Committee
February 23, 2023

Co-Chairs Maroney and D'Agostino, Ranking Members Cicarella, Rutigliano, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee, thank you for raising House Bill 5434, An Act Concerning the Regulation Of Cannabis.

Our proposal is looking at the best ways to keep our community safe while they have access to adult use cannabis.

Since the legalization of cannabis, we have communities across the state that falsely believe that Cannabis is safe and effective. As this drug has not had controlled trials at the federal level these claims are neither proven nor accurate. It is incumbent upon the state of Connecticut to explain to consumers the risks of using cannabis. And it is incumbent upon retail sellers to share that risk with consumers as well.

Since several states have preceded us in legalizing, we have much to learn from their journey. Both California and Colorado have implemented some stellar labeling and safety measures to protect the public. I warn that we need to be careful as our enforcement measures will need to be ramped up as well. These laws will only work as well as they are enforced and as well as our consumers and business owners are educated. An unintended consequence that we are seeing in other states is the increase in illegal sells for those trying to get around high price and regulations.

Some news that we need to take VERY seriously.

According to the Colorado Department of Transportation, a state which also legalized recreational cannabis. In 2020 there were 48 fatalities where the drivers had greater than 5 nanograms/ml of THC in their blood

American Academy of Pediatrics just released this month Pediatric Edible Cannabis Exposures and Acute Toxicity. Looking from 2017 to 2021. Total of 7043 cases of toxicity (3054 were in 2021). 22.7% were hospitalized, including the ICU

We are still waiting for more precise studies on the effects of secondhand smoke. Anecdotally we know secondhand smoke is an issue but the extent of it is still to be confirmed.

What can we do to protect the residents of Connecticut?

- Restrictions to Cannabis-related automobile stops need to be repealed. This is a safety issue to those in the car and those driving on the same roads.
- Vaping/smoking should not occur around children
- We need every town to have a DRE
- Cannabis has NO approved effective uses. No retailer should make that claim. No label or retail website should have a health-related claim. This is illegal by the FDA too.
- Each item must be identified with a set standard label indicating it is cannabis.
- Labeling should contain dose, directions, side effects, the onset of action.
- Labeling should in larger letters contain warnings like Do not Drive while using and an estimated time period if it is an edible
- Warning should include: Warning: may be addictive and cause psychosis, and birth defects during pregnancy, and be addictive
- The statute should also be changed to say that retailers MUST include a pamphlet on health risks and addiction services with each sale.
- Child-proof packaging on individual servings for all forms, including edibles
- Where unable to divide into small dosage form, maximum of 20 doses of 5mg equivalent should be in each container with bold letters of what dosage is equivalent to 5mg in either liquid or vape oil.
- The statute already says no product type that appeals to children...so that means cookies and sugar-coated gummies and chocolate.
- The websites of retailers need to have all of these warnings items as well. Every product needs to have a risk.
- The DPC website should contain clearer, more prevalent language on the risks of cannabis.
- All Cannabis products sold in CT need to be approved by the state of CT or possible a shared regulatory body with our neighboring states that have approved adult use. Unfortunately, we do not have a federal FDA. This will mean more staff needed for these approval processes.
- Standard labeling with a cannabis symbol that show it is approved by State of CT.

The last and most important is that no law, rule or regulation is helpful unless there is education and enforcement.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill.